

Equal Opportunities Policy

Policy Title: Equal Opportunities
Policy



To ensure all aspects of the school are managed fairly and without discrimination.

Initiated: September 2003

Groups consulted: Governors
Staff

Reviewed: March 2008

Audience: Staff
Governors

Policy located: Staff Handbook
Shared Drive (<O:\WHOLE STAFF INFORMATION\Policies>)

Policy format: Full

Policy relates to :

EASTBOURNE TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY

- 1 Providing Equal Opportunities is NOT about treating everyone the same. It is about treating each other according to their individual needs.

Whilst having many needs in common, boys and girls, women and men, the black and the white, the different socio-economic groups, the able and the disabled, the more-able and the less-able **IN LEARNING** and employment have **SOME DIFFERING NEEDS**.

Good practice in education is:

- a) Satisfying the differing needs.
- b) Ensuring Equal Access and Opportunity.
- c) Ensuring that particular groups or individuals do not suffer detriment by proxy of their gender, ethnicity, class or perceived ability.

'We aim to ensure equality of access and opportunity for learners of all ages, needs and abilities in a safe and secure environment' – from ESCC Education Department's statement on Equal Opportunities in Curriculum and School Management.

E.T.C. aims to:

- A) Provide equality of access and opportunities for all students, irrespective of gender, disability, race, religion, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, marital status, having dependants, age, sexual orientation, social class, trade union activity, political belief and medical condition, as far as possible (including people living with HIV or AIDS).
- B) Ensure that the principle of equality of opportunity is reflected in the structure and management of the school, e.g. in providing positive role modelling and the curriculum and organisation, including the grouping of students.
- C) Provide appropriate support for student with special educational needs and students with other special needs e.g. students from whom English is an additional language and travelling children, in order to give them access to the whole curriculum.
- D) Monitor and review students' achievement and destinations by gender, attainment, disability, background and ethnicity in order to contribute to the achievement of fairness of treatment.
- E) Eliminate all forms of harassment including homophobic bullying and racial harassment, which are barriers to effective teaching and learning and to promote good working relations among all students and staff.
- F) Promote multicultural education in that the curriculum should respond to the cultural heritage of the pupils and prepare all pupils for living in an ethnically and culturally diverse society.
- G) Involve parents, carers and the local community as partners in the learning process and encourage them to contribute to the development of a learning culture for all.

Statutory Duties

The school has a statutory duty to comply with various legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Sex Discriminations Act, Disability Discrimination Act, the Children Act and the various Education Acts.

The Role of Governors

- Governors have specific legal responsibilities for school management and play a significant role in policy development and practice within E.T.C.
- Governors have a legal responsibility in the area of equal opportunities, for example, in relation to recruitment and selection of staff, special educational needs and sex education.
- The governing body reflects the community that the school serves, for example in terms of gender, race, socio-economic background and age.
- The Governors Staffing Sub-Committee will monitor the Equal Opportunity Policy.

Admissions

- The criteria governing casual admissions are applied to all groups including children with special educational needs, refugee children, children from traveller families and students with English as an additional language.
- E.T.C. welcomes and supports newly arrived students and staff to settle in. Induction, interviews and programmes ensure the smooth settling in of new arrivals.
- The school provides new parents with information about school policies and opportunities to become involved in their children's education.
- The school ensures that all parents have equality of access to information and treatment irrespective of gender, race, disability, sexual orientation and socio-economic background.

Uniform

- When deciding the uniform policy at E.T.C., proper consideration will be given to cost, quality and maintenance so that it does not discriminate against households with a lower income.
- The uniform does not discriminate between gender and religious groups.
- Parents who have difficulty in complying with uniform regulations because of financial constraints are offered easy payment terms.

Other Provisions

- E.T.C. is aware of the special requirements and observances of different religions that may require separate or different provisions.
- Displays reflect the diversity in the society and the world in which pupils live as well as the experiences of students.
- Bilingual learners are encouraged to develop proficiency in their heritage language and, where appropriate, we encourage students to enter public examinations in them, as well as developing English to access the curriculum.
- There are positive role models of ethnic minority and disabled staff and visitors as well as gender representation in areas where there is traditionally role stereotyping.

Preparation for a Multicultural & Diverse Society

E.T.C:

- Has adopted the LA's policy on Multicultural Education.
- Celebrates, respects and fosters cultural, linguistic and individual diversity.
- Prepares our students for the reality of living in a culturally and linguistically diverse society.
- Ensures that racism, sexism and homophobia and all forms of stereotyping are addressed both in the academic and pastoral curriculum
- Celebrates the major religious festivals of different groups represented in the school community.

E.T.C. teachers:

- Ensure that all curriculum areas actively address equal opportunities in terms of access, content and resources.
- Support the development of pupils' self-esteem with regard to their personal and cultural identities.
- Ensure that the experiences and achievements of disadvantaged groups in society are acknowledged and celebrated in the curriculum.

Assessment & Monitoring Pupil Performance

E.T.C. ensures that:

- All students have full opportunity to show what they know and can do.

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- Assessment tasks and tests are not culturally exclusive in their content, assumptions and reference points.
- Assessment tasks are appropriate to the students' competence in English (ie, students with English as an additional language – EAL), when necessary the involvement of the Bilingual Support Service is sought.
- Decisions relating to exams, tiers of entry and levels of NC tests are based on informed and accurate observations and assessment of attainment, not on subjective impressions or judgements of student's behaviour.
- Students' attainments are monitored by ethnicity, gender and disability so that positive steps may be taken to remove any obstacles or disadvantages which may impede learning.
- Students are given the opportunity and encouragement to achieve across the whole range of activities and to have these achievements assessed and celebrated.
- Stereotypical expectations of the achievements of girls and boys and of different ethnic minority groups do not affect assessments of individual student's activities.
- Students with special educational needs are well supported for National Curriculum SATs and that appropriate modifications and arrangements are available and used.
- Where setting occurs, the progress of individual pupils is continually monitored and setting arrangements are flexible enough to allow the movement of individual pupils.
- Students' profile or Record of Achievement takes account of bilingual skills, oral and written, and out of school community involvement.

Resources

- Faculties and year teams review resources to ensure that they are free from bias and stereotypes in terms of contents, language and illustrations.
- Resources are carefully selected to address inequalities and negative attitudes in a sensitive manner and develop concepts of justice, fairness and conflict resolution.
- Resources reflect the reality of a culturally and linguistically diverse society. The achievements of people from a range of societies and backgrounds are recognised and celebrated including people with disabilities.
- Curriculum materials are selected and developed to take account of the students' backgrounds and draw upon their different cultural/social experiences in order to enhance their personal and social development.
- Parents, community groups and other outside agencies are involved in the development and selection of resources.

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- Students are provided with opportunities to explore the richness and multi-ethnic nature of British culture within and outside East Sussex.
- A school policy provides guidelines on the display of materials and students' work in the school. Wayne Jones has overall responsibility for the quality of displays and will organise guidance for staff on the implications of policy and the construction of effective displays. There is a checklist to ensure that the materials on display reflect positively the achievements of men and women, girls and boys, different ethnic and social groups and people with disabilities.

Employment

Staffing is a key resource for whole school success including the successful implementation of the equal opportunities policy. The staffing structure of the school reflects the talent, skills and abilities drawn from our diverse community and demonstrates the school's commitment as an equal opportunities employer.

The aim of our equal opportunity is to ensure that:

Recruitment & Selection of Staff

- No applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of gender, disability, race, religion, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, marital status, having dependants, age, sexual orientation, social class, trade union activity, political belief, medical condition (including people living with HIV or AIDS).
- Staff selection criteria and processes are designed and implemented to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and treated according to their merits (ie, on the basis of their relevant qualifications, experience, skills and abilities).
- The selection outcomes and processes are regularly reviewed to check that practice is in line with the policy.
- When advertising and providing information about posts, job descriptions and person specifications are used as basis for selection.
- All staff and governors involved in appointments are fully trained on equal opportunities in recruitment and selection.

Staffing

- All staff are aware of their responsibility in promoting equal opportunities.
- There is shared ownership about the school's equal opportunity policy among all staff.
- All forms of harassment are totally unacceptable. Harassment undermines the expectation of equal worth and mutual respect, which should characterise all relationships.

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- Staff feel empowered to challenge discriminatory language and behaviour both in the staff room and in the classroom, without being marginalised.
- Procedures are in place and are promoted for any employee who believes that they have been unfairly treated within the scope of the policy.
- Staff relationships are characterised by mutual respect and equal worth.
- All staff are encouraged to develop their skills and potential.
- All induction training refers to the school's equal opportunities policy and the role of staff within it.

The School in the Community

The school has central role to play in the promotion of equal opportunities in the community through a positive partnership with parents, governors, employers, other educational institutions and statutory agencies and support groups.

- Parents are aware of the school's equal opportunities policy.
- There is a statement in the school prospectus on equal opportunities.
- Parents from different cultural background are invited into the school to talk about their culture, religion or occupation.
- All parents are made to feel welcome and involved in the school.
- The physical environment promotes equality of access.
- E.T.C. liaises with parents and other groups in the school community.
- Visitors and adult helpers in the school are briefed about the school's equal opportunities policy and the code of conduct that is expected of them.
- There is a complaints procedure and this is communicated to all sections of the school community,
- E.T.C. promotes its achievements and success in the school community. All achievements are equally valued and promoted.
- E.T.C. promotes its links with statutory and voluntary organisations on issues of equal opportunities.
- E.T.C. is sensitive to the changing needs in its wider community.

Appendix 1: Discrimination Definitions (taken from ESCC website czone)

Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination means treating employees or job applicants less favourably because of, for example, their race, sexual orientation or age.

This may take the form of unlawfully:

- deciding not to employ someone
- dismissing them
- refusing to provide them with training
- denying them promotion
- giving them adverse terms and conditions
- denying them access to benefits available to other employees.

Indirect Discrimination

Indirect discrimination results from an organisation having selection criteria, policies, benefits, employment rules or any other practices which, although they apply to all employees, have the effect of disproportionately disadvantaging a particular group or groups of people. Where the practice cannot be justified, indirect discrimination is unlawful whether it is intentional or not.

This may take the form of specifying a height restriction that excludes more women than men, or disadvantaging disabled people by requiring a formal qualification that is not strictly necessary for the job.

To justify a policy or practice, an employer must show that there is a legitimate aim (e.g. a real business need) and that the practice is proportionate to that aim (i.e. necessary, and there is no alternative way of achieving it).

Institutional Discrimination

Institutional discrimination occurs when the culture, policies, systems and procedures in an organisation inherently discriminate against a group or groups of people. This happens because the systems and processes were designed without taking into account the diverse needs of groups within the community in relation to e.g. their race, disability or gender.

Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them having regard to all the circumstances including the perception of the victim.

Harassment includes behaviour that is offensive, frightening or in any way distressing. It may be intentional bullying which is obvious or violent, but it can also be unintentional, subtle and insidious. It may involve nicknames, teasing, name calling or other behaviour which is not with malicious intent but

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which is upsetting. It may be about e.g. the individual's gender or disability or it may be about the sexual orientation (real or perceived) of those with whom the individual associates. It may not be targeted at an individual but consist of a general culture which, for instance, appears to tolerate the telling of racist, age-related or homophobic jokes.

Victimisation

Victimisation is when an individual is treated detrimentally because they have made a complaint or intend to make a complaint about discrimination or harassment or have given evidence or intend to give evidence relating to a complaint about discrimination or harassment. They may become labelled 'troublemaker', denied promotion or training, or be 'sent to Coventry' by their colleagues.

If this happens or if organisations fail to take reasonable steps to prevent it from happening, they will be liable and may be ordered to pay compensation. Individuals who victimise may also be ordered to pay compensation.

Genuine Occupational Qualifications (GOQ)

In very limited and rare circumstances it will be lawful for an employer to treat people differently if it is a genuine occupational requirement that the job holder must be of e.g. a particular gender or race. This could be for reasons of authenticity e.g. in a restaurant or dramatic production, or to provide personal services to people from a particular racial group, defined by colour or nationality, in order to promote their welfare, which only a person of the same colour or nationality can do 'most effectively'.

When deciding whether this applies, it is necessary to consider the nature of the work and the context in which it is carried out, whether there is an existing member of staff who could undertake the relevant aspects of the job. Jobs may change over time and organisations should, from time to time, consider whether the requirement continues to apply, particularly when recruiting.

If it is thought that a GOQ applies to a particular post, the institution should contact Personnel and Training at ESCC to discuss this before advertising the job.